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The impact of congruence between self-concept and destination personality on behavioural intentions for visiting an Islamic-historical destination

Abstract

Today, understanding the reason for tourists choosing an Islamic destination over other destinations is considered a vital aspect of Islamic tourism studies. In this paper, an attempt is made to analyse the factors influencing the behavioural intentions including congruence between self-concept and destination personality, destination personality and tourist's satisfaction and perceived experience. The targeted respondents of the present research consist of foreign tourists who chose a historical-Islamic destination. Data was analysed through structural equation modelling (SEM). Results show that the tourists' perceived experience and satisfaction influence the behavioural intentions of the tourist. Furthermore, the congruence between self-concept and destination personality influences the tourists' perceived experience and satisfaction and finally, perceived experience influences tourist satisfaction.

Keywords: self-concept, destination personality, tourist satisfaction, perceived experience, SEM

1. Introduction

During the last decade, the national and international tourism industry has expanded considerably and is considered as a main source of income for many developing countries (Asadi et al., 2014). However, Iran has devoted very little attention to this global business in spite of its potential and its position as being among the top countries in terms of tourist attractions and variety (Ranjbarian et al., 2012). One of the reasons for this is the failure of the tourism industry's managers and officials to recognise the rapidly growing tourism industry and exploit the opportunities available to them from modern technology (e.g. software and hardware facilities). The tourism industry is sensitive to environmental change and some tourists leave some of the most famous and historical destinations quickly for various reasons (Asadi et al., 2014). As a result, the unprecedented growth of the tourism industry in the last few years and competition on a global level, have posed new challenges

for target marketing. Destinations need specific marketing strategies that will ensure they stand out among other destinations; a tourism destination can be seen as a product or be perceived as a brand because any destination consists of a set of tangible and intangible characteristics (Gartner, 2014; Khazaei pool *et al.*, 2014; Pike and Page, 2014). When tourists perceive similarities between the destination properties and their own personality, they will be more willing to travel to that destination. Aaker (1995) stated that the main concept of self-congruence theory refers to stimulating consumers to have a preference for the brand 'personality' that fits with their own personality. Applying the basic concept of self-congruence theory to the field of tourism, it could be hypothesised that the more congruence there is between the destination personality and the visitor's self-concept, the more likely it is that the visitor will have an optimal attitude towards that destination. Therefore, understanding the relevance of destination personality and visitor self-concept is important to understanding complex travel behaviour (Usakli and Baloglu, 2011). The historical and geographical characteristics of Isfahan and the existence of infrastructure related to tourism have made plans to develop the city as an Islamic-historical destination possible.

Isfahan city in Iran has always attracted tourists and provided them with a variety of attractions and facilities. According to statistics obtained from the Isfahan Administration of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism, the percentage growth of foreign tourists to this province was 57.2% over the past three years which is considered to be considerable compared to the percentage growth of domestic tourism (16.3%) over the same period (Shahin et al., 2014). Therefore, to sustain this growth and attract more foreign tourists to this Islamic-historical destination, more studies are needed. However, understanding and predicting tourists' behavioural intentions will provide tourism marketers and tourism management organizations with challenges as few studies to date have examined this key element and its influential factors. As a result, the present study aims to investigate the influence of factors such as the congruence between self-concept and destination personality with tourist satisfaction, and the impact of perceived experience on a tourist's behavioural intentions.

2. Literature review

2.1. Islamic tourism

Since the advent of Islam, Islamic tourism has been related to concepts such as exploring Islamic knowledge, culture, heritage, art, Islamic history and other moral issues (Khalilur

Rahman, 2014). The notion of Islamic tourism is so general that it cannot be encompassed by a single definition. Islamic tourism refers to different kinds of tourism such as family tourism which is based on Islamic teachings and intends to explore the remaining traces of distant and new civilizations. There is great meaning in visiting Islamic destinations. One of these meanings refers to traveling in Islamic countries for the purposes of travel, research and exploration in Islamic areas not for the purpose of income (Rahimi Moghaddam and Mousavi, 2013).

2.2. Congruence between self-concept and destination personality (SC-DP)

The debate about the congruence between self-concept and destination personality dates back to the 1950s. Gardner and Levy (1955) and Malhotra (1988) for example, discussed the congruence between self-concept and product image. Self-congruence can be seen as a broad concept of self-concept (Usakli and Baloglu, 2011). The congruence itself refers to the correspondence between a tourist's self-concept and the perceived image of a brand (product or destination). Congruence between a product's image and self-image can lead to a preference for this product and finally purchase behaviour. In other words, people tend to exhibit behaviours consistent with their self-image (self-concept) (Hung and Petrick, 2011). Congruence theory believes that since most people tend to use particular brands or products to show themselves at their best, consumers try to use products or brands which are more consistent with their self-concept or self-image. The mental process of comparing oneself with other objects is called self-concept which describes the concurrence or lack of concurrence between the consumer's self-image and the image of a product, brand or company. From a consumer psychology perspective, congruence is the link which the consumer makes between the perceived image of a product, store or brand and his/her own perceived image (Parker, 2005). As self-concept is considered to be a multi-dimensional structure which the four major types of self-concept, self-appropriateness is also viewed as multi-dimensional. There are four major types of appropriateness: actual self-congruity, ideal self-congruity, actual social self-concept and ideal social self-concept (Usakli and Baloglu, 2011).

2.3. Perceived experience

Since the 1960s, there have been great changes in the conceptualisation of customer experience. In the Oxford English Dictionary the term 'experience' is defined as 'practical or real observations and acquaintance with facts or events' (Donnelly, 2009).

Poulsson and Kale (2004) define consumer experience as the act of engaging in the process of collision between service provider and consumer in which the consumer understands the value in the collision and remembers this. They determined consumer experience as an indicator with five dimensions including: novelty, learning, personal communication, surprise and engagement. As indicated above, consumer experience includes a number of complex elements that are both subjectively and objectively influential and constitute consumer's perceptions and attitudes (Page and Connell, 2006). In tourism, consumer experience management is complex and includes several stages from travel planning, staying and returning home. Moreover, the tourist experience includes distinct and heterogeneous service providers. All these complications have made the definition, description and understanding of the tourism experience challenging (Gnoth, 2002). In this study, tourist experience is defined as the quality of understanding observations, and memorable events in the tourism destination; this is measured through four types of experience: stimulating, exciting, enjoyable and interesting.

2.4. Tourist satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction is considered a fundamental concept in marketing. Consumer satisfaction is defined as a general evaluation after a particular purchase decision (Achouri and Bouslama, 2010). Satisfaction is defined as a 'positive feeling in the consumer which happens after experiencing the consumption by comparing the product or service expectations and its perceived performance' (Achouri and Bouslama, 2010). In tourism, tourist satisfaction is expressed as a degree of activated positive emotions from the acquired experience in the tourism destination (Coban, 2012). Undoubtedly, satisfaction is one of the relevant variables when analysing a tourist's behaviour, while consumption of products and services and the decision to return to the destination influence the choice of destination (Armario, 2008; Jang and Feng, 2007; Kim et al., 2015; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000).

2.5. Behavioural intentions

The behavioural component is generally innate and has a sense of commitment. When a consumer makes a decision, the decision will lead to behaviour. From the perspective of the consumption process, tourists' behaviour is divided into three stages: before the visiting, during the visiting, and after the visiting. Chen and Tsai (2007) stated that tourists' behaviour includes destination selection for visiting, assessment and future behavioural intentions. In general, assessments include travel experience, perceived value and visitors' satisfaction. While future behavioural intentions refer to the visitors' judgment of the destination, willingness to revisit the destination and whether they would recommend it to others. (Mat Som et al., 2012).

3. Conceptual model and hypotheses development

In view of the above-mentioned points and the important function of the influential factors on tourist's behavioural intentions, we attempted to examine the influence of such factors on the tourist's behavioural intentions using a conceptual model (Figure1). By identifying the influence of such factors on a tourist's selection behaviour and destination preference, the development of more suitable plans to attract tourists would be possible.

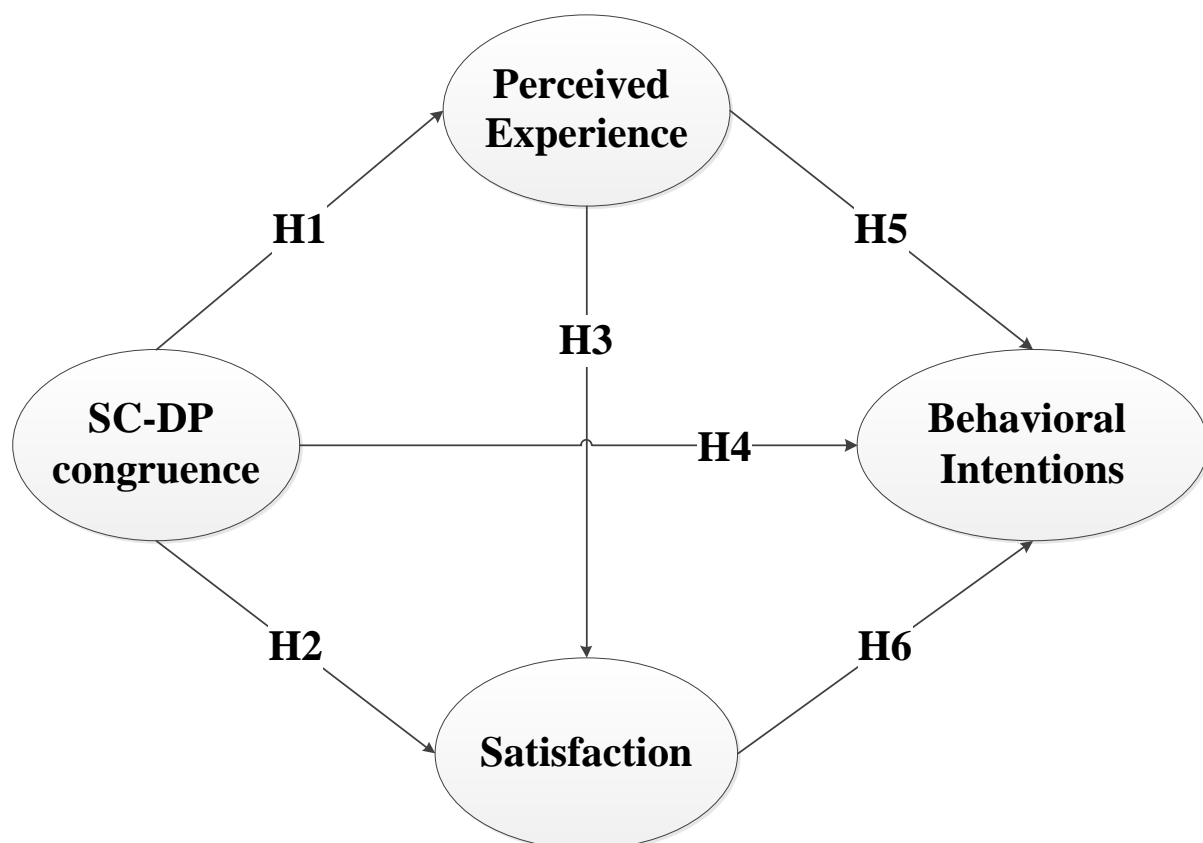


Figure 1. Research model

3.1 SC-DP congruence and perceived experience

SC-DP congruence plays a significant role in influencing tourists' behaviours (Ahn et al., 2013). For instance, research finds congruence affects loyalty (Zhang et al., 2014), facilitates positive attitudes toward destinations (Hosany and Martin, 2012), influences consumer decision-making (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012), attitudes (Pratt and Sparks, 2014), and consumers' emotions (Koo et al., 2014)

Real competition to attract tourists compels destination marketers to better follow the distinguishing attributes of tourist experiences (Gretzel et al., 2006). Tourists seek unique, astounding, and memorable experiences. A plethora of research seeks to investigate tourist experiences across various aspects (Small et al., 2012). Tourists' experiences have received limited resources. Holidays are consumption experiences enabling tourists to express and reinforce their SC-DP congruence in destination (Yarnal and Kerstetter, 2005). Arguably, greater congruity with one's self-concept and destination personality results in a more engaging experience. The above discussions frame the following hypothesis:

H1. SC-DP congruence influences perceived experience.

3.2 SC-DP congruence and satisfaction

Researches also report a strong relationship between SC-DP congruence and satisfaction (Shahin et al., 2014). Similarly, the tourism literature recognizes SC-DP congruence influence in modelling tourist behaviours. Khazaei Pool et al. (2013) examine the relationship between tourists' SC-DP congruence and satisfaction and conclude SC-DP congruence affects satisfaction with destinations. Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H2. SC-DP congruence influences tourist satisfaction.

3.3 Perceived experience and satisfaction

Tourist destinations offer experiential advantage and opportunities to engage in socially unique and memorable experiences (Kwortnik, 2006). Understanding tourist experiences gives real insights on post consumption behaviours, such as satisfaction and word of mouth. Duman and Mattila (2005) demonstrate that the affective experience of travel positively influences satisfaction. Hosany and Martin (2012) further establish that tourist experiences

positively affect overall satisfaction. Thus, we develop the next hypothesis of our study as follows:

H3. Perceived experience influences tourist satisfaction.

3.4 SC-DP congruence and behavioural intentions

Different rationales have been proposed to explain why tourists engage in behaviour intentions including SC-DP congruence. Some researches indicated that SC-DP congruence is a motivation of tourism behaviour (Li, 2009). The consensus generated from later studies suggests that SC-DP congruence is a useful approach to explaining tourist intentions (Quintal et al., 2014), customer loyalty (Chen and Phou, 2013) and destination brand loyalty (Ekinci et al., 2013). The studies of tourism and congruity suggested that self-congruity have positive influence on behavioural intentions (Khazaei et al., 2013). Given the above, the paper hypothesizes the following:

H4. SC-DP congruence influences behavioural intentions.

3.5 Perceived experience and behavioural intentions

Prior research shows consumer experiences relate to future behaviour. For example, Yoon et al. (2013) finds creating an experience drives customer loyalty. Several studies establish perceived experience make a recommendation to other people (Hosany and Martin, 2012). Past studies also indicated that in most cases travel experience positively influenced visitors' intention (San Martin et al., 2013; Ryu et al., 2012). These empirical viewpoints inform the following hypotheses:

H5. Perceived experience influences behavioural intentions.

3.6 Satisfaction and behavioural intentions

Many studies have examined the antecedents of revisit intentions. Additionally, the causal relationships between customer perceptions of satisfaction and behavioural intentions have been established by previous studies (Ranjbarian and Khazaei Pool, 2014). Siu et al. (2012) studied how the customers' satisfaction affects and behavioural intentions in Macau. According to the results, the customers' satisfaction is likely to increase behavioural intentions. Within this research area, many empirical studies have reported the role of

tourist satisfaction both in word of mouth (WOM) and revisiting a destination (Ali & Amin, 2014; Allameh et al., 2015). Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

H6. Tourist satisfaction influences behavioural intentions.

4. Research method

This study applied a survey research design. A self-administrated questionnaire was conducted to collect empirical data from foreign tourists in Isfahan, an Islamic and historical city in Iran during the winter of 2015. Due to limited time and manpower, a convenience sampling method was adopted. Tourists at the end of their visit were asked to take part in the survey. Those agreeing were asked to complete the questionnaire. A total of 550 questionnaires were distributed and 397 usable responses were obtained after removing incomplete samples, yielding a response rate of 72.2%.

The questionnaire design was based on a review of the literature and specific characteristics of tourism. The questionnaire was pre-tested and revised to ensure content validity. All items across the four variables were measured with a 5-point Likert-type scale, from ‘strongly disagree (1)’ to ‘strongly agree (5)’.

We have adapted the measurement items for all the constructs in the research models from the existing literature. The study uses a scale of twelve items developed by Usakli and Baloglu (2011) to measure congruence between self-concept and destination personality. An eight items scale for satisfaction was adapted from Gallarza and Saura (2006), Zabkar et al. (2010), and Quintal and Polczynski (2010). Four items of perceived experience was adapted from Hosany and Martin (2012). Finally behavioural intention was measured through a five items scale adapted from Li (2009); Zabkar et al. (2010).

In addition, in order to verify the construct validity of the questionnaire, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used. The results of the CFA confirmed the validity of the questionnaire. Cronbach's α was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. Table 1 illustrates the questionnaire variables, sources of questions, Cronbach's α and the factor loading.

Table1. Reliability and validity analysis

| Variable | | Item | Factor loading | t-values | α | CR | AVE |
|------------------|---------|--|----------------|----------|----------|-------|-------|
| SC-DP Congruence | SC-DP1 | Is fahan City is commensurate with the way I really perceive myself. | 0.739 | 18.034 | 0.922 | 0.934 | 0.542 |
| | SC-DP2 | I am quite similar to the character of Isfahan City. | 0.580 | 11.136 | | | |
| | SC-DP3 | The character of Isfahan City is commensurate with the way I really perceive myself. | 0.559 | 11.023 | | | |
| | SC-DP4 | Isfahan City is proportional to the way I like to perceive myself. | 0.606 | 12.169 | | | |
| | SC-DP5 | I like to be perceived like the character of Isfahan City. | 0.625 | 13.340 | | | |
| | SC-DP6 | The character of Isfahan City is comparable to the way I like to perceive myself. | 0.761 | 13.034 | | | |
| | SC-DP7 | Isfahan City is proportional to the way I believe I am perceived by others. | 0.773 | 15.414 | | | |
| | SC-DP8 | I believe that others perceive me like the character of Isfahan City. | 0.771 | 15.332 | | | |
| | SC-DP9 | The character of Isfahan City is commensurate with the way I believe I am perceived by others. | 0.695 | 14.156 | | | |
| | SC-DP10 | Isfahan City is proportional to the way I like to be perceived by others. | 0.731 | 13.905 | | | |
| | SC-DP11 | I like others to understand me like the character of Isfahan City. | 0.717 | 15.211 | | | |
| | SC-DP12 | The character of Isfahan City is proportional to the way I like others to perceive me. | 0.745 | 15.637 | | | |
| Satisfaction | SAT1 | I am pleased with my decision to visit Isfahan City. | 0.803 | 14.194 | 0.908 | 0.926 | 0.613 |
| | SAT2 | My visit to Isfahan City was the very thing I needed. | 0.610 | 11.112 | | | |
| | SAT3 | The facilities and conditions of Isfahan City were more than what I expected. | 0.725 | 14.152 | | | |
| | SAT4 | I feel pleased with my decision to come to Isfahan City. | 0.617 | 14.149 | | | |
| | SAT5 | My overall assessment of my visit to Isfahan City is positive. | 0.757 | 13.135 | | | |
| | SAT6 | My overall assessment of my visit to Isfahan City is favorable. | 0.822 | 14.117 | | | |

| Variable | | Item | Factor loading | t-values | α | CR | AVE |
|------------------------|------|--|----------------|----------|----------|-------|-------|
| Perceived Experience | SAT7 | I'm happy with my decision to visit Isfahan City. | 0.779 | 13.344 | 0.852 | 0.901 | 0.696 |
| | SAT8 | My visit to Isfahan City provided me with good experience. | 0.787 | 13.440 | | | |
| | EX1 | My experience of traveling to Isfahan City was stimulating to me. | 0.620 | 15.251 | | | |
| | EX2 | My experience of traveling to Isfahan City was exciting to me. | 0.816 | 14.304 | | | |
| | EX3 | My experience of traveling to Isfahan City was enjoyable to me. | 0.927 | 15.253 | | | |
| | EX4 | My experience of traveling to Isfahan City was interesting to me. | 0.755 | 12.876 | | | |
| Behavioural Intentions | BI1 | I think Isfahan City is the best as a tourist destination among other destinations. | 0.695 | 14.821 | 0.869 | 0.905 | 0.657 |
| | BI2 | As a tourist destination, I prefer Isfahan City to other destinations. | 0.708 | 21.147 | | | |
| | BI3 | I have a favorable perception of Isfahan City as a tourist destination. | 0.717 | 14.840 | | | |
| | BI4 | If I decide to travel, I will choose Isfahan City as my destination once again. | 0.771 | 14.845 | | | |
| | BI5 | I will recommend my friends and relatives to choose Isfahan City as their tourist destination. | 0.788 | 16.998 | | | |

All measures demonstrated acceptable reliability above the recommended level of 0.70 and factor loadings above the cut-off value of 0.50. A CFA was performed to specify the structure between the observed indicators and the latent constructs, and to test the validity of the measurement model. Subsequently, structural equations among latent constructs were examined to test the conceptual structural equation model (SEM). All of the CFA and SEM procedures were conducted using maximum likelihood parameter estimates with AMOS 20.

5. Findings

The data were analysed with a two-step approach. First, we assessed the measurement model fit to establish the reliability and validity of the scales used in our analysis. Second, we examined the model fit of the structural model and reported on the testing of the substantive

H1 through to H6. Details are discussed below. Table 2 shows the level of acceptable fit and the fit indices for the measurement models in this study.

Table 2. Total fit indices of measurement models

| Indices Name Variable | Cmin/df | GFI | AGFI | CFA | RMSEA |
|--------------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| SC-DP Congruence | 1.63 | 0.97 | 0.94 | 0.99 | 0.040 |
| Satisfaction | 1.87 | 0.99 | 0.95 | 0.99 | 0.047 |
| Perceived Experience | 1.82 | 0.99 | 0.97 | 0.99 | 0.046 |
| Behavioural Intentions | 1.07 | 0.99 | 0.98 | 1.00 | 0.014 |
| Recommended Value | <3 | >0.90 | >0.90 | >0.90 | <0.10 |

Note: Cmin/df, chi-square /degree of freedom; CFA, confirmatory factor analyses; GFI, goodness-of-fit index; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation.

As shown in Table 2, all the indices exceed their respective common acceptable levels. In other words, the fit indices indicate that the data support the measurement models in a suitable way.

After testing the fit and construct validity of each individual measurement model, the overall measurement model was examined. Table 3 shows the level of acceptable fit and the fit indices for the conceptual model in this study.

Table 3. Total fit indices of the survey

| Indices Name Variable | Cmin/df | GFI | AGFI | CFA | RMSEA |
|--------------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Final model | 1.31 | 0.94 | 0.90 | 0.99 | 0.028 |
| Recommended Value | <3 | >0.90 | >0.90 | >0.90 | <0.10 |

As shown in Table 3, the fit indices for the hypothesised structural model are acceptable. These values were all above recommended levels, indicating a good fit between the

model and the observed data. Figure 2 shows the final structural model with path results.

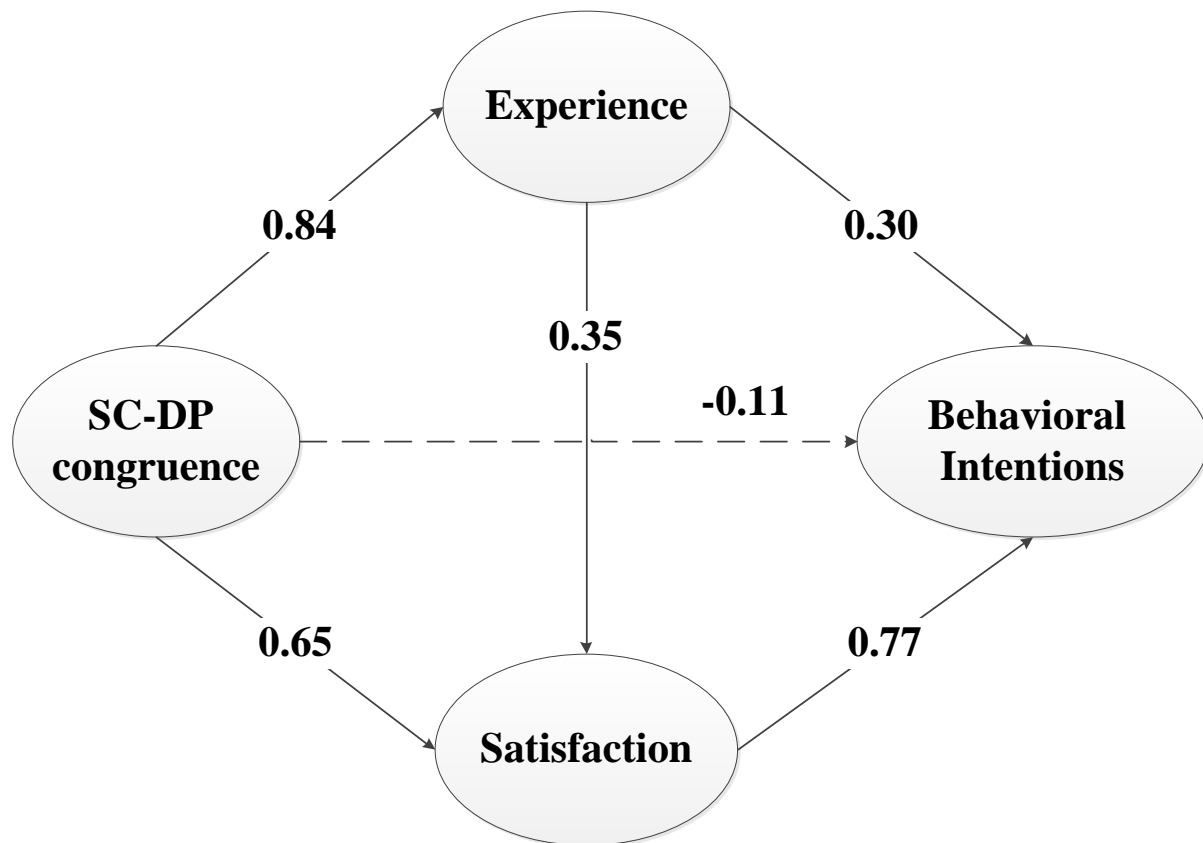


Figure 2. Structural equations model of survey

As the model was found to fit the data well, the hypotheses were tested. Table 4 shows the parameter estimates and significance levels.

Table 4. Regression coefficients and results of hypotheses test

| Hypothesis | Path | | β | CR | Result |
|------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---------|-------|-----------|
| H1 | SC-DP Congruence | → Experience | 0.84*** | 12.79 | Supported |
| H2 | SC-DP Congruence | → Satisfaction | 0.65*** | 8.84 | Supported |
| H3 | Perceived Experience | → Satisfaction | 0.35*** | 5.63 | Supported |
| H4 | SC-DP Congruence | → Behavioural Intentions | -0.11 | -0.95 | Rejected |
| H5 | Perceived Experience | → Behavioural | 0.30*** | 3.49 | Supported |

| Hypothesis | | Path | | β | CR | Result |
|------------|--------------|------------|------------------------|---------|------|-----------|
| | | Intentions | | | | |
| H6 | Satisfaction | → | Behavioural Intentions | 0.77*** | 4.71 | Supported |

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$.

The hypotheses were tested by examining the path coefficient between the exogenous variables and the endogenous variables. The test statistic used here was critical ratio (CR), which indicates whether the parameter estimate is statistically different from zero (Byrne, 1998). As shown in Table 4, five structural path estimates were statistically significant (as indicated by $CR > 1.96$) and validated.

6. Conclusion and discussion

The present study examined the influence of congruence between self-concept and destination personality, perceived experience and satisfaction on a tourist's behavioural intentions in the Islamic-historical city of Isfahan using a SEM method. The result of testing the first hypothesis (i.e. the influence of congruence between self-concept and destination personality on a tourist's perceived experience) implies that the regression coefficient related to this hypothesis at a significance level of ($p < 0.001$) is 0.84 and CR is 12.79. This verifies the hypothesis. As a result, it can be claimed that congruence between self-concept and destination personality (SC-DP congruence) influences a tourist's perceived experience of the Islamic-historical destination. The result of this hypothesis is in line with the findings of Hosany and Martin (2012). The result of their study showed that self-concept congruence which includes the real and ideal self-concept, influences tourists' experiences.

In addition, the result of this hypothesis conforms to the findings of Sirgy and Su (2000). However, in their study, experience was found to have a mediating role in the relationship between self-congruence and tourist behaviour. They claim that the effects of self-congruence on travel behaviour will be greater for tourists who have less experience.

The result of testing the second hypothesis (i.e. the influence of congruence between self-concept and destination personality on tourist satisfaction) showed the regression coefficient at 0.65 to be significant ($p < 0.01$) with a CR of 8.84. This verifies the hypothesis. As a result, it can be stated that congruence between self-concept and destination personality influences

tourist satisfaction from an Islamic-historical point of view. The result of this hypothesis is in line with Chon's (1992) research. The results of Chon's study showed that the more congruence there is between self-concept and destination, the greater the tourist's satisfaction. The result of this hypothesis is in line with a study by Ekinici et al. (2008) which states that the ideal self-concept has a positive influence on the consumer's satisfaction. The result is also in line with the results of Hosany and Martin (2012), which state that self-concept congruence which includes real and ideal self-concepts influences satisfaction in an indirect way. Finally, the result has a clear correlation with Chon and Olsen's study (1991) which states that both self-congruence and functional-congruence are related to tourist's satisfaction and non-satisfaction. The result of testing the third hypothesis (i.e. the influence of perceived experience on tourist satisfaction) finds that the regression coefficient related to this hypothesis is 0.35 at a significance level of ($p < 0.001$) with a CR of 5.63. This verifies the hypothesis. As a result, it can be concluded that perceived experience influences tourist satisfaction of the Islamic-historical destination. The result is exactly as found by Hosany and Martin (2012). Their results showed that experience influences a tourists' satisfaction. The results of testing the fourth hypothesis (i.e. the influence of congruence between self-concept and destination personality on behavioural intentions) indicates that the regression coefficient related to this hypothesis is -0.11 ($p > 0.01$) and CR is -0.95. This rejects the hypothesis. As a result, it cannot be stated that perceived experience influences a tourist's satisfaction with an Islamic-historical destination. This result is in contrast to the results of Usakli and Baloglu (2011), Li (2009), Kastenholz (2004), Beerli et al. (2007) and Sirgy and Su (2000) which showed that congruence does influence a tourist's behavioural intentions. The result of testing the fifth hypothesis (i.e. the influence of perceived experience on tourist's behavioural intentions) found a regression coefficient related to this hypothesis of 0.30 ($p < 0.001$) and CR 3.49. This verifies the hypothesis. The result of this hypothesis is not in line with research by Hosany and Martin (2012). Tests of the sixth hypothesis (i.e. the influence of satisfaction on tourist intentions) resulted in a regression coefficient of 0.77 ($p < 0.001$) and CR 4.71. As a result, it can be stated that satisfaction influences a tourist's behavioural intentions towards the Islamic-historical destination. This result is congruent with Hosany and Martin (2012). Hosany and Martin (2012) findings show that satisfaction has a positive relationship with intention to recommend to others, which is one of the components of behavioural intention. Furthermore, the result is in line with Ekinici et al. (2008). Their results verified the matching role of consumer satisfaction in the relationship between ideal self-congruence and intention to return.

7. Managerial Implications

The theoretical results of this study have several implications for marketers and service providers in the tourism industry, or at least for those linked to the provision of creative-hospitality products.

Based on the positive influence of SC-DP congruence on tourist's perceived experience and satisfaction, it is recommended that the destination marketing manager includes convincing advertisements in their advertising and marketing promotions to portray Isfahan City as a desirable Islamic-historical destination. This will provide more congruence between tourist's self-concept and the personality of Isfahan City; as a result, tourists are likely to have better experiences and experience greater levels of satisfaction with Isfahan City.

As concluded in this study, the type and quality of the tourist's perceived experience influences his/ hers satisfaction with a particular destination. As a result, it is recommended that the destination marketers provide high-quality services at suitable times and places, and provide visitors with suitable environments and special facilities with regard to Islamic-historical places in order to provide tourists with enjoyable experiences and help ensure their satisfaction when visiting Isfahan City. Besides, tourism organizations can make use of online media in order to improve a tourist's experiences. As a result, online movies about an Islamic-historical destination's mediating variables could stimulate potential tourists' imaginations and memories and improve their experiences.

This finding suggests that tourism practitioners should make efforts to ensure the success of tourism industry as well as to enhance the wellness of tourists by managing tourists' recovery experiences during their vacations, which ties into the concept of consumer behaviour.

Based on the positive influence of a tourist's experience on his /her behavioural intentions, it is recommended that senior manager of tourism organizations provide tourists with a memorable experience by providing suitable tourism facilities and high-quality tourism products and services. This will encourage tourists to share their experiences with other potential tourists and persuade them to travel to Isfahan. Furthermore, a tourist that has already had a desirable experience in Isfahan will be more likely to revisit the city. Moreover, tourism organizations could design a website that suggest that features a virtual tour that would not be accessible from traditional form of media. Such a virtual tour would offer

potential visitors the opportunity to experience different aspects of the destination before deciding to visit a location.

As a result, the website can be designed in a way to give the tourist confidence that his choice of Isfahan is preferable over other destinations. According to the importance and influence of self-concept destination personality on behavioural intentions, it is recommended that destination marketing managers design their advertising messages in accordance with a tourist's self-concept.

In these messages, they could include a destination personality which makes the tourist believe the destination is in accordance with his/her self-concept and personality. This makes will make it more likely that tourists will choose this destination over others.

Based on the hypothesis which supports the influence of tourist satisfaction on tourist behavioural intentions, it is recommended that managers of tourism organizations (which are considered as service providing organizations) hold training courses for all employees and administrative staff which focus on building relationships with tourists and ensuring their satisfaction. Since in service providing organizations employees – having a direct relationship with the customers – have a key role in ensuring tourist satisfaction, it is also recommended that the training courses include inputs on maintaining relationships with tourists once built. Tourism employees are in a unique position to persuade tourists to revisit (in preference to other destinations) and recommend Isfahan City to others by ensuring their satisfaction.

Moreover, satisfying the experiential wants of tourists requires developing peace of mind, which helps tourists relax and indulge themselves not only in the activities offered but in the Islamic-historical destination such as Isfahan. Tourists intentionally seek familiar cues to help them feel sure and certain. We thus recommend that practitioners offering creative tourism destinations should be transparent in disclosing information about the activities.

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